

Definitions of Exceptional Children Categories

Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three (3) that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional-behavioral disability.

Deaf-blindness means coexistent hearing and visual impairments that have an adverse effect on the child's education performance, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with hearing or visual disabilities, unless supplementary assistance is provided to address educational needs resulting from the two disabilities.

Developmental delay or "DD" means that a child within the ages of three (3) through eight (8) has not acquired skills or achieved commensurate with recognized performance expectations for his age in one or more of the following developmental areas: cognition, communication, motor development, social-emotional development, or self-help/adaptive behavior. Developmental delay includes a child who demonstrates a measurable, verifiable discrepancy between expected performance for the child's chronological age and current level of performance.

Emotional-behavioral disability or "EBD" means that a child, when provided with interventions to meet instructional and social-emotional needs, continues to exhibit one or more of the following, when compared to the child's peers and cultural reference groups, across settings, over a long period of time and to a marked degree: (1) Severe deficits in social competence or appropriate behavior which cause an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with adults or peers; (2) Severe deficits in academic performance which are not commensurate with the student's ability level and are not solely a result of intellectual, sensory, or other health factors but are related to the child's social-emotional problem; (3) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or (4) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. EBD does not apply to children who display isolated (not necessarily one) inappropriate behaviors that are the result of willful, intentional, or wanton actions unless it is determined through the evaluation process that the child does have an emotional-behavioral disability.

Hearing impairment or "HI", sometimes referred to as "deaf" or "hard of hearing", means a hearing loss that has an adverse effect on educational performance to the extent specially designed instruction is required and that: (a) may be mild to profound, unilateral or bilateral, permanent or fluctuating as determined by: 1. An average pure-tone hearing loss in the speech range (500Hz, 1000Hz, and 2000Hz) of at least 25dB in the better ear; 2. An average pure-tone hearing loss in the high-frequency range (2000Hz, 4000Hz, and 6000Hz) of at least 45dB in the better ear; or 3. An average pure-tone unilateral hearing loss in the speech range (500Hz, 1000Hz, and 2000Hz) of at least 60dB in the impaired ear; and (b) results in difficulty identifying linguistic information through hearing.

Mental disability means that a child has one of the following: (a) A mild mental disability (**MMD**) in which: 1. Cognitive functioning is at least two (2) standard deviations below the mean; 2. Adaptive behavior deficit is at least two (2) standard deviations below the mean; 3. A severe deficit exists in overall academic performance including acquisition, retention, and application of knowledge; and 4. Manifestation is typically during the developmental period; or (b) A functional mental disability (**FMD**) in which: 1. Cognitive functioning is at least three (3) or more standard deviations below the mean; 2. Adaptive behavior deficits are at least three (3) or more standard deviations below the mean; 3. A severe deficit exists in overall academic performance including acquisition, retention, and application of knowledge; and 4. Manifestation is typically during the developmental period.

Multiple disabilities or "MD" means coexistent disabilities that have an adverse effect on the child's educational performance, the combination of which causes severe educational needs that cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. Examples of MD include mental disability-blindness, and mental disability-orthopedic impairment. The category multiple disabilities does not mean deaf-blindness nor does it mean a speech or language impairment in combination with another category of disability.

Orthopedically impaired or "OI" means a severe disorder of the bones, joints, ligaments or muscles that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes: (a) An impairment caused by a congenital anomaly such as clubfoot, or absence of some member; (b) A disease such as poliomyelitis or bone tuberculosis; and (c) An impairment from other causes such as cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures.

Other health impairment or "OHI" means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that result in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment and that is due to a chronic or acute health problem. Examples of such chronic health problems include acquired immune deficiency syndrome, asthma, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, Tourette's syndrome, or tuberculosis. The health problem must adversely affect a child's educational performance.

Specific learning disability or "LD" means a disorder that adversely affects the ability to acquire, comprehend, or apply reading, mathematical, writing, reasoning, listening, or speaking skills to the extent that specially designed instruction is required to benefit from education. LD includes conditions like dyslexia, dyscalculia (poor aptitude with numbers), dysgraphia, developmental loss of the ability to speak (aphasia), and perceptual/motor disabilities. The term does not include deficits that are the result of other primary determinant or disabling factors such as vision, hearing, motor impairment, mental disability, emotional-behavioral disability, environmental or economic disadvantaged, cultural factors, limited English proficiency, or lack of relevant research-based instruction in the deficit area. A student with specific learning disabilities has the intellectual ability (average and above) but there is inconsistency between his achievement and that intellectual ability.

Speech or language impairment means a communication disorder, including stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, a voice impairment, delayed acquisition of language, or an absence of language, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Traumatic brain injury or "TBI" means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Traumatic brain injury does not mean brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma. Traumatic brain injury means open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, including cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem-solving, sensory, perceptual, motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing and speech.

Visual impairment or "VI" means a vision loss, even with correction that: (a) requires specialized materials, instruction in orientation and mobility, Braille, visual efficiency, or tactile exploration; (b) has an adverse effect on the child's educational performance; and (c) meets the following: 1. The child has visual acuity with prescribed lenses that is 20/70 or worse in the better eye; or 2. The child has visual acuity that is better than 20/70 and the child has one of the following conditions: a. A medically-diagnosed progressive loss of vision; b. A visual field of twenty (20) degrees or worse; c. A medically-diagnosed condition of cortical blindness; or d. A functional vision loss.